Merger of MTNL and BSNL

†375. SHRIMATI KAMLA MANHAR : Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for non-merger or delay in merger of public sector undertakings—BSNL and MTNL;

(b) whether Government propose to take a final decision for merger of these two public sector undertakings;

(c) if so, by when the said merger would take place; and

(d) if not, the extensive details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Sir, the Government has appointed the Consultants to suggest best option for bringing synergy of operations between two public Sector Undertakings (PSUs) - BSNL and MTNL and not necessary for merger of two PSUs.

(b) to (d) Do not arise in view of (a) above.

Talks on subsidy on agricultural exports

†376. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether discussions were held to withdraw the subsidy being provided on all kinds of exports including on agricultural exports in the Summit of G-8 nations held recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) its likely impact on India?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) Yes.

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) and (c) The G-8 reaffirmed their commitment to open markets more widely to trade in agricultural goods, industrial goods and services, and in agriculture to reduce trade distorting domestic subsidies and eliminate all forms of export subsidies by a credible end date. The impact on India will depend on the manner in which this is reflected in the outcome of the ongoing multilateral trade negotiations.

Indo-Banglandesh relations

377. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the extent of progress made in diplomatic relation between India and Bangladésh during the last one year;

(b) whether there has been any improvement in matters of trade and commerce between India and Bangladesh during the above period; and

(c) what steps have been suggested to reduce border-tension between these two countries?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI E. AHAMMED): (a) India's relations with Bangladesh continued to make progress during the last one year. Prime Minister met Bangladesh Prime Minister on the sidelines of the BIMSTEC Summit in July 2004.The Bangladesh Foreign Minister visited India twice in May-June 2004 and in November 2004. Other Ministerial visits from Bangladesh include those of Minister of Commerce in November 2004, Minister of Finance in December 2004 and Health Minister in April 2005. Official level meetings included those of the Home Secretaries and the Water Resources Secretaries in September 2004. Foreign Office Consulations were held in June 2005. During these meetings, both sides reaffirmed the importance that they attach to the bilateral relationship and expressed their intent to further expand, deepen and strengthen cooperation.

(b) Bilateral trade and commercial relations continued to show healthy growth rates. Bilateral trade in 2004-05 touched US$ 1.6 Billion. Meetings have been held of the Joint Working Groups on Trade, Para and Non Tariff barriers and, the Joint Customs Group to consider a bilateral Free